

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 LAGOS 02012 01 OF 02 181657Z

41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-11 ACDA-05 /088 W

----- 005153

R 181552Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3405

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 2012

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: DIMKA'S VISIT TO UK HIGH COMMISSIONER

1. LT. COL. B.S. DIMKA, THE REPORTED ASSASSIN OF MURTALA MUHAMMED, CALLED ON UK HIGH COMMISSIONER SIR MARTIN LEQUESNE FEBRUARY 13 ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER THE LATE NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE WAS KILLED. GIVEN BELOW (PARAGRAPH 5 AND FOLLOWING) IS THE VERBATIM TEXT OF THE REPORT OF THE CONVERSATION AS SUBMITTED BY LEQUESNE TO THE FCO. LEQUESNE GAVE ME A COPY OF THE REPORT THIS MORNING.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER DICTATING THE REPORT FRIDAY MORNING, LEQUESNE ARRANGED FOR A COPY OF IT TO BE TAKEN URGENTLY TO M.D. YSUFU, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE AND ONE OF THE TOP SIX MEMBERS OF THE MUHAMMED GOVERNMENT. THE HIGH COMMISSION HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY LOCATING YUSUFU, FINALLY TRACKING HIM DOWN SHORTLY AFTER NOON "HIDING

"

AT HIS HOME. LE QUESNE TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT YUSUFU'S BEHAVIOR ON FRIDAY MATCHED THAT OF OBASANJO, ARMY CHIEF-OF-STAFF DANJUMA AND MEA COMMISSIONER GARBA, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "GUTLESS."

3. WHEN FINALLY LOCATED AT MID-DAY FRIDAY, YUSUFU SEEMED RESIGNED
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 02012 01 OF 02 181657Z

TO WHATEVER MIGHT HAPPEN TO HIM, REFUSING A HIGH COMMISSION OFFER TO MOVE HIM OUT OF HIS HOUSE TO A SAFE LOCATION "WHERE HE MIGHT BE

ABLE TO REGROUP HIS COLLEAGUES." AS FOR THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE OTHER THREE, LEQUESNE SAYS HE HAS BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED THAT THEY "RAN HOME" AND CHANGED INTO CIVILIAN CLOTHES AS SOON AS THEY HEARD THE DIMKA BROADCAST. GARBA WAS NOT HEARD FROM FOR THE REST OF THE DAY. OBASANJO MADE NO APPEARANCE UNTIL MID-AFTERNOON AND CHANCES FOR THE COUNTER-COUP APPEARED GOOD. AS FOR DANJUMA, HE WENT TO THE BONNY CAMP ON VICTORIA ISLAND AROUND MIDDAY TO RALLY LOYALIST MILITARY FORCES

BUT WAS SO UNNERVED AND OUT-OF-CONTROL THAT HIS PRINCIPAL STAFF OFFICER COL. ISAMA, HAD TO TAKE CHARGE. IT WAS ISAMA WHO PERSUADED THE OTHERS THAT THE OPERATION TO RETAKE THE RADIO STATION SHOULD BE SURGICAL AND CAREFUL SO AS NOT TO INJURE CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS AND EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD BE NEEDED IF THE ATTACK WERE SUCCESSFUL. DANJUMA HAD REPORTEDLY INSTRUCTED THAT THE STATION BE "SMASHED DOWN" WITH ARMORED CARS AND HEAVY GUNS. IT WAS ISAMA WHO LED THE COUNTERATTACK ON RADIO STATION IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON. (COMMENT: THIS DOES NOT JIBE WITH INFORMATION FROM EMBASSY'S DAO THAT ATTACK ON RADIO STATION WAS LED BY COL. IBRAHIM BABANGIDA, DIRECTOR OF ARMOR OF THE NIGERIAN ARMY. DAO SAW BABANGIDA LEADING HIS ARMOR PAST EMBASSY CHANCERY ON WAY TO STATION. FORCE CONSISTED OF THREE BRITISH SCORPION TANKS, TWO FRENCH FERRET ARMORED CARS, THREE PANHARD ARMORED CARS WITH NINETY MILLIMETER GUNS, AND THREE TRUCK LOADS OF INFANTRY TALLING ABOUT 100 MEN.)

4. READERS WILL NOTE DIMKA'S STATEMENT TO LEQUESNE TO THE EFFECT THAT OBASANJO HAD BEEN KILLED. THIS CORROBORATES INDICATIONS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WAS INDEED ONE OF THE TARGETS OF DIMKA'S OPERATION. WE AND THE BRITISH SURMISE THAT COL. DUMUJA, WHO WAS SHOT IN HIS MERCEDES AUTOMOBILE FRIDAY MORNING WHILE PROCEEDING ALONG THE SAME ROUTE TO DODAN BARRACKS NORMALLY FOLLOWED BY OBASANJO, WAS MISTAKEN FOR OBASANJO.

5. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF LEQUESNE'S MEMORANDUM TO THE FCO.

QUOTE: 1. AT ABOUT 9:10 A.M. ON 13 FEBRUARY THE HEAD OF CHANCERY INFORMED ME THAT COLONEL DIMKA HAD COME TO THE HIGH COMMISSION AND WISHED TO SEE ME. I WENT OUT TO MEET HIM. THREE ARMED SOLDIERS WERE IN THE OUTER WAITING-ROOM AND COLONEL DIMKA, UNARMED AND WITHOUT HIS CAP, WAS IN THE INNER WAITING-ROOM. I BROUGHT HIM INTO MY ROOM. HE
CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 02012 01 OF 02 181657Z

SHOWED NO PARTICULAR SENSE OF URGENCY OR HURRY AT ANY STAGE IN OUR CONVERSATION. THE HEAD OF CHANCERY WAS PRESENT THROUGHOUT.

2. COLONEL DIMKA STARTED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND HAD COME TO ASK ME TO TRANSMIT A MESSAGE URGENTLY TO GENERAL GOWON THAT HE SHOULD COME TO TOGO. GENERALS MUHAMMED AND OBASANJO HAD TO HIS REGRET BEEN KILLED "RESISTING ARREST." I ASKED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO GENERAL DANJUMA. COLONEL DIMKA SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET BEEN FOUND. WHEN HE WAS IT WOULD DEPEND ON HIM. COLONEL DIMKA INDICATED CLEARLY THAT HE MEANT BY THIS THAT IF GENERAL DANJUMA

OPPOSED THE NEW "GOVERNMENT" HE TOO WOULD BE KILLED.

3. I ASKED COLONEL KIMKA WHY HE HAD TAKEN THIS STEP. HIS REPLY WAS FAR FROM CLEAR. HE SAID THAT UNDER GENERAL MUHAMMED THE COUNTRY WAS GOING COMMUNIST, WHICH WAS "CONTRARY TO OUR CONSTITUTION" AND TO WHAT THE COUNTRY WANTED. "WE" WANTED TO CHANGE THE POLICY AND GET BACK TO REAL NON-ALIGNMENT. THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS ONE-SIDED. A PARTICULAR GROUP HAD BEEN RUNNING THE COUNTRY IN ITS OWN WAY. GENERAL MUHAMMED HAD ACCEPTED A BRIBE OF TWENTY FIVE MILLION POUNDS FROM THE RUSSIANS.

4. HE CRITICISED THE RECENT PROMOTIONS TO GENERAL RANK WHICH HAD IGNORED THE ESTABLISHED TRADITION OF PROMOTION. GENERAL DAJNUMA WAS NOT THE BEST OFFICER IN THE ARMY. HE HAD NEGLECTED THE OTHER RANKS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 02012 02 OF 02 181702Z

41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-11 ACDA-05 /088 W

----- 005178

R 181552Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3406

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LAGOS 2012

MANY PEOPLE HAD BEEN SACKED FOR CORRUPTION WHILE OTHERS WHO HAD BEEN EQUALLY CORRUPT CONTINUED TO OCCUPY HIGH PLACES. THOSE WHO HAD BEEN CORRUPT WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY LEGAL MEANS. HE IMPLIED THAT SOME OF THOSE RECENTLY DISMISSED WOULD BE REINSTATED THOUGH HE DENIED, IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO RECALL THEM ALL.

5. A LOT OF CHARGES WERE NEEDED AT HOME. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAD DONE NOTHING BUT CARRY OUT PROBES. THE MILITARY GOVERNORS WERE BEING DIRECTED FROM LAGOS AND HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE. "WE" INTEND TO DRAW A STRAIGHT LINE UNDER THE PAST AND GET THE COUNTRY RIGHT AGAIN FROM ITS BASIC FOUNDATIONS. "NONE OF US IS INTERESTED IN POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS. WE WANT SOMEONE TO COME IN AND RECONCILE THE BAD FEELINGS." THAT IS WHY GENERAL GOWON SHOULD COME BACK. THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A NEED FOR GENERAL GOWON'S LEADERSHIP TO BE CHANGED, BUT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO DO THIS.

6. I TOLD COLONEL DIMKA THAT, AS A DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR ME TO PLAY ANY PART IN NIGERIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. TO SEND A MESSAGE TO GENERAL GOWON AS HE REQUESTED WOULD BE TO DO JUST THIS. I COULD NOT THEREFORE DO WHAT HE WANTED. COLONEL DIMKA ACCEPTED THIS WITHOUT DEMUR AND IMMEDIATELY CHANGED HIS TACK AND SAID THAT WHAT HE WANTED WAS THAT I SHOULD REPORT WHAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LAGOS 02012 02 OF 02 181702Z

HE HAD SAID TO MY GOVERNMENT.
I SAID THAT I WOULD OF COURSE DO THIS.

7. I ASKED COLONEL DIMKA WHO HIS COLLEAGUES WERE TO WHOM HE REFERRED THROUGHOUT AS "WE". HIS REPLY WAS AGAIN IMPRECISE. HE SAID "WE ARE THE YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES." HE WAS THE MOST SENIOR OFFICER IN THE GROUP THE OTHERS WERE MAJORS. THEY HAD ACTED BECAUSE THE OTHER RANKS WERE WAITING FOR A BLOODY RISING. THE COUP IN 1966 HAD BEEN STARTED BY THE OTHER RANKS.

8. I ASKED WHAT SUPPORT HE HAD IN THE COUNTRY. HE SAID AIRILY THAT THERE HAD BEEN MOVES IN IBADAN, KADUNA, KANO AND JOS - BUT IT STRUCK ME AS HE SPOKE THAT HIS REPLY WAS MORE AN ENUMERATION OF THE MAJOR CITIES OUTSIDE LAGOS THAN THE STATEMENT OF A MAN WHO ACTUALLY KNEW WHAT WAS BEING DONE IN THESE PLACES.

9. I TOLD COLONEL DIMKA THAT I FOUND SOME CONTRADICTION BETWEEN HIS CLAIM TO BE A LEADER OF YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES AND HIS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR A LEFT-WARD TREND. HE GAVE A RATHER VAGUE REPLY TO THE EFFECT THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WANTED CHANGES.

10. OUR CONVERSATION ENDED AT ABOUT 0945. I ACCOMPANIED COLONEL DKMKA OUTSIDE TO THE WAITING-ROOM, AND THEN TO THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD RETURN LATER TO SEE ME AGAIN. HE DID NOT.

11. I ARRANGED FOR A COPY OF THE TELEGRAM WHICH I SENT TO LONDON REPORTING THIS CONVERSATION TO BE SHOWN TO THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE LATER IN THE MORNING.

12. COLONEL DIMKA WAS THROUGHOUT CALM AND APPARENTLY UNDER NO FEELING OF URGENCY. I JUDGED THAT THE VAGUENESS AND INCOHERENCE OF MOST OF WHAT HE SAID WAS DUE NOT TO ANY STRESS BUT TO THE FACT THAT HIS IDEAS

WERE INDEED INCOHERENT AND UNFORMULATED. EVEN HAD HE SERIOUSLY WANTED ME TO SEND A MESSAGE TO GENERAL GOWON IT WAS INCREDIBLE THAT, HAVING, AS HE CLAIMED, JUST TAKEN OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT, HE SHOULD TAKE THE TIME HIMSELF TO COME DOWN TO HAJOLA HOUSE TO MAKE THE REQUEST. BUT IN FACT HE DROPPED HIS REQUEST WITHOUT ARGUMENT WHEN I SAID I COULD NOT COMPLY WITH IT. THERE WAS SOMETHING ALMOST FRIVOLOUS ABOUT THE WHOLE BUSINESS AND HE LEFT ME WITH NO IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY PREDETERMINED PLAN. UNQUOTE.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LAGOS 02012 02 OF 02 181702Z

EASUM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, THREATS, POLITICAL LEADERS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAGOS02012
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760060-1138
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760240/aaaabism.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 MAY 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIMKA'S VISIT TO UK HIGH COMMISSIONER
TAGS: PFOR, NI, (DIMKA, B S), (MUHAMMED, MURTALA), (LEQUESNE, MARTIN), (OBASANJO, OLUSEGUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006